

TESTIMONY TO SUPPORT HB 3497

Chair Hartman and Esteemed Members of the Committee

My name is Dr. Keren Brown Wilson and I am requesting your support of HB 3497. I have worked with older adults since 1975. I came to Oregon in 1977 to complete my PhD in gerontology at PSU's Institute on Aging. I was drawn to Oregon because of an exciting experimental program called the FIG Waiver project and a historic piece of legislation called SB 1955. Some of you might remember that this project and the legislation were the bedrock of today's 1915 D Medicaid waiver which provides qualified older and disabled Oregonians access to one of the most advanced articulated systems of LTC in the country. I am proud to be called the mother of the Oregon model of assisted living and for helping develop the first Medicaid assisted living in the US. That was a giant step forward and showed great farsightedness by the State and its leaders. Thousands have benefited from that momentous action nearly 50 years ago. But that was more than a generation ago and we now are at another pivotal moment. Others will have told you about the great imminent and permanent age structural change that is upon us. Indeed, the legislation references it. Oregon once again has the opportunity be bold and embrace not only the challenges, but the opportunities that will be presented by Oregon's changing age structure. Virtually every person, in every community and every area of life – education, transportation, housing, labor, even the economic vitality of the State will be impacted. This legislation will provide Oregon with the opportunity to demonstrate once again its leadership and create a better shared future for all Oregonians.